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Sen. Gerratana, Rep. Ritter and Distinguished Members of the Public Health Committee,

I'm writing to you in **OPPOSITION** to HB 5911, An act Concerning a Restructuring of the EMS Advisory Board.

First, allow me to introduce myself and my perspective. I am a 19 year veteran EMT and Paramedic with experience with both commercial and volunteer organizations. I have served as a lieutenant at a volunteer service and recently have joined a committee of the EMS Advisory Board. Over the last few years I've taken an interest in the planning and development of advancing the EMS system forward. About five years ago I found an EMS related listserv and through that, learned about the existence of the EMS Advisory Board. The Chairman of that board was also active on the listserv and has built a large e-mail list of recipients that regularly receive agendas, minutes, and other news from the various committees of the CEMSAB as well as the core board itself.

Over the years I have observed three meetings – all of which had a robust attendance. Despite only knowing one or two people in the room, a member of the board typically offered me a seat at the table to listen and observe even though I am not a voting member.

At one point I served on the paramedic committee a few years ago, and recently joined the legislative committee. I have also sat in on a couple meetings of the Mobile integrated Healthcare committee which worked on SB 800 which you are hearing today.

From my experience, the involvement in this board has been welcoming and open to all stakeholders. That is indicative by the Statute which establishes the board and the diversity of its membership to not only include EMS personnel and administrators, but also doctors, nurses, state police and at least three members of the fire service. It is where all stakeholders in this relatively young profession come together with a variety of viewpoints to advance the best interests of providers and patients.

The work of the CEMSAB has been very transparent, invitational and provides many opportunities for participation by interested members. Just yesterday a colleague asked me how he could get involved in their work while at the same time questioning why the Fire Service members are so interested in changing a key part of our industry through legislation rather than within the existing Board structure itself. I share the same concerns.

Unfortunately, the culture of the two industries will provide you with those answers. I feel that it is unfortunate that this bill was raised this year. I do not feel that it is in the best interest of the Fire Service, the EMS service or a constructive use of the time of the legislature. Those bringing forth this proposal are largely from the Fire Service. It is regret – and apologies to my friends in the Fire Service – that I feel compelled to discuss some of the apparent motivations openly and on the record. Many of the accusations levied against the Board are misplaced and false. However, it has provoked a discussion about the size of the Board which I anticipate may provide change or recommendations several months from now. However, I think this discussion belongs with CEMSAB itself, and within the EMS system to decide first before proposing any legislation enabling such a drastic change.

Let's discuss the differing culture between the two groups.